

Disposition of Remains Report: Tokyo

May 31, 2017

Part I. Name of Country: Japan

Part II. U.S. Embassy Information

U.S. Embassy

Address: 1-10-5 Akasaka, Minato-ku, Tokyo 107-8420, Japan

Phone: Country Code 81 Area Code 3 3224-5000 (24 hr Switchboard)

Fax: Country Code 81 Area Code 3 3224-5856 (American Citizen Services)

[State Department Country Specific Information](#)

[State Department Travel Information](#)

[Smart Travel Enrollment Program \(STEP\)](#)

Part III. Profile of Religions of the Host Country and Religious Services available to visitors

Country Profile: Visit the State Department's website [“Background Note: Japan”](#)

Religions: Shintoism and Buddhism are Japan's two principal religions. Christianity has an estimated 3 million adherents throughout Japan.

Religious Activities for Visitors: English-language services are available in the Tokyo and Yokohama areas for members of most denominations. Religions represented include Roman Catholic, Baptist, Seventh-day Adventist, Episcopal, Mormon, Christian Scientist, Lutheran, Interdenominational, Jewish, and Interdenominational Charismatic. The churches offer a variety of fellowship for all age groups and combined programs to provide services for the benefit of the foreign community in the area.

PART IV. Funeral Directors, Mortician and Related Services Available in Tokyo and its vicinity:

DISCLAIMER: The U.S. Embassy, Tokyo, Japan, assumes no responsibility or liability for the professional ability or reputation of, or the quality of services provided by, the following persons or firms. Names are listed alphabetically, and the order in which they appear has no other significance. Professional credentials and areas of expertise are provided directly by the funeral directors, morticians and other service providers.

- [Airhearse International Inc.](#)

305A-1, No. 1 International Cargo Bldg., 2-6-3 Haneda-kuko, Ota-ku, Tokyo 144-0041

Tel from the U.S.: 011-81-3-6459-9509

Fax from the U.S.: 011-81-3-6459-9510

Chief Operating Officer/President: Ms. Rie Kimura

Operating with a contract embalmer.

Cremation/shipment can be also arranged.

- **Hakuzensha Funeral Company**
 Embalming Office
 32-1 Shinminato, Mihama-ku, Chiba-shi, Chiba-ken 261-0002
 Tel from the U.S.: 011-81-43-244-7761
 Fax from the U.S.: 011-81-43-244-7792
 Interpreter: Ms. Noriko Mitsutake
 Operating with 3 embalmers including a Canadian embalmer. Cremation/shipment can be also arranged.
- **International Mortuary Systems Inc. (IMS)**
 5-17-3 3F Shiba Kawaguchi-shi, Saitama-ken 333-0866
 Tel from the U.S.: 011-81-48-261-3302
 Fax from the U.S.: 011-81-48-262-2120
 Admin: Ms. Megumi Tsukamoto
 Operating with 9 embalmers including a Canadian embalmer.
 Cremation/shipment can be also arranged.
- **Maruki Memorial 21 Co., Ltd.**
 1-3-10 Shitaya, Taito-ku, Tokyo 110-0004
 Tel from the U.S.: 011-81-3-5246-5521
 Fax from the U.S.: 011-81-3-5246-5523
 Cremation/shipment can be also arranged.
- **Santoku Funeral Parlor Co., Ltd.**
 7-1 Irifune 2-chome, Chuo-ku, Tokyo 104-0042
 Tel from the U.S.: 011-81-3-3551-2047 / 3019
 Fax from the U.S.: 011-81-3-3555-1966
 Director: Mr. Tetsuya Koizumi
 Operating with a contract embalmer. Cremation/shipment can be also arranged.

PART V. Profile of services available in Japan regarding preparation and shipment of remains.

Cremation is the norm in Japan. Due to limited refrigerated storage facilities available at police stations and hospitals, prompt arrangements for transfer of the body to a funeral home are required soon after a death. Police stations and hospitals usually have local funeral home contacts available for the family.

1. Maximum Period Before Burial

There is no Japanese law limiting the time in which a body must be interred, but the scarcity and expense of refrigerated storage facilities dictate that the disposition of remains be completed as quickly as possible, particularly in the summer months. Lack of immediate access to funds to pay for transportation and cold storage could lead to the unilateral disposition of the decomposing remains as a public health hazard by the local authorities. The only Japanese law governing the disposition of remains is Law No. 48 of 1948 ("Law Regarding Graveyards, Burials and Others"). This law states that "a corpse or stillborn fetus shall not be buried or cremated earlier than 24 hours after its death or

birth, except as otherwise provided by ordinance". When death results from an infectious or epidemic disease, however, interment within 24 hours is permitted under Law No. 36 of April 1, 1897, entitled "Infectious Disease Prevention Law" which requires that (1) an immediate report be made to the Public Health Center so that areas of possible contamination may be promptly disinfected; and (2) a post-mortem examination be conducted by a physician, after which the body may be cremated or buried within 24 hours after death.

2. Embalming

Cremation is the norm in Japan. Embalming is uncommon and the practice is so rare that it has never been subjected to government regulation. Therefore, there are no standards or licensing procedures for embalming. There are several U.S.-standard commercial embalming facilities in Tokyo's consular district. These companies have been operating with Canadian and American embalmers since the 1990's, and report a growing interest among Japanese in the cosmetic aspects of embalming prior to cremation. In recent years, there are Japanese embalmers who are trained in Japan.

3. Cremation

There are crematoria in most localities in Japan, and arrangements for cremation are handled by local undertakers. The only legal requirement is to obtain a Permission-for-Cremation document, which is issued by a village, town, ward, or city office upon presentation of the Report of Death. Japanese cremation procedures do not result in the same sized fine ash as it does in the United States, but in somewhat larger-sized pieces of bone. For an additional charge, bone can be processed into fine bone.

4. Caskets and Containers

There are no Japanese laws, national or local, governing the exportation of human remains. A casket containing a body or human ashes is treated as ordinary freight. Shipping companies, however, require that the body be placed in a metal lined casket. Suitable caskets or transfer cases are readily available and meet the requirements of the U.S. Public Health Service and U.S. port authorities. Containers for human ashes are also available.

5. Exportation of Remains

Procedures and documents for the exportation of human remains are as follows. Except as noted, all are shipping company or U.S. requirements:

Embalmed Body:

1. Embalming of the remains
2. Enclosure of the remains in a metal lined casket
3. Consular Report of Death

4. Death certificate from the local government authority (required by Japanese customs)
5. Mortician's embalming certificate
6. Mortician's statement of placement of remains in the coffin
7. Copy of the deceased' passport
8. Regular customs declaration (required by Japanese Customs)

Human Ashes: (air freight)

9. Cremation certificate
10. Consular Report of Death
11. Death certificate from local government authority (required by Japanese Customs)
12. Consular Mortuary Certificate
13. Affidavit from local funeral director concerning contents of urn
14. Copy of the deceased' passport

Human Ashes: (mail)

According to the Japanese postal office, ashes cannot be shipped to the United States by mail.

6. Costs

All dollar costs have been converted from the cost in local currency at the rate of exchange as of May 30, 2017, which was 111.00 yen to one dollar.

Service	Yen	Dollars
(a) Local interment of cremated remains including cremation, local transportation, urn, permanent grave plot, and gravestone The average price for permanent grave plot and the gravestone in Tokyo is approx. 2,600,000 yen (\$23,423.42).	3,010,000	\$27,117.11
(b) Embalming fee:	162,000	\$1,459.46
(c) Cremation fee:	86,400	\$778.38
Bone processing fee (to make fine bones)	32,400	\$291.89

(d) Preparation for shipment:		
1) Including Embalming, documentation, casket, storage, Local transportation	1,072,000	\$9,657.66
2) Including cremation, documentation, coffin, local transportation and urn	650,000	\$5,855.86

(e) When death occurs outside of the Metropolitan Tokyo area, the remains may be transferred to Tokyo and its vicinity such as Chiba and Saitama for preparation. Under these circumstances, the following additional transportation fees may be charged by Tokyo's undertakers for the round trip from Tokyo to the location of the remains:

Location	Yen	Dollars
Tokyo Metropolitan Tokyo area	35,000	\$315.32
Narita, Chiba Pref.	60,000	\$540.54
Yokohama, Kanagawa Pref.	60,000	\$540.54
Tokorozawa, Saitama Pref.	82,000	\$738.74
Maebashi, Gunma Pref.	100,000	\$900.90
Mito, Ibaraki Pref.	100,000	\$900.90
Nagano, Nagano Pref.	300,000	\$2,702.70
Oyama, Tochigi Pref.	150,000	\$1,351.35
Shizuoka, Shizuoka Pref.	200,000	\$1,801.80
Kofu, Yamanashi Pref.	150,000	\$1,351.35
Fukushima, Fukushima Pref.	250,000	\$2,252.21
Niigata, Niigata Pref.	245,000	\$2,207.21
Yamagata, Yamagata Pref.	400,000	\$3,603.60

(f) Air Freight: Airline freight charge per kilogram is uniform - 1,590 yen (\$14.32) to the West Coast and 1,900 yen (\$17.12) to the U.S. East Coast.

Human Remains: Average weight of an export type casket with human remains is 230 kilograms. Costs for air freight shipment from Tokyo to various points in the United States are as follows:

Tokyo to:	Rate/Kg	Total Yen	Total Dollars
New York	1,900 (\$17.12)	437,000	\$3,936.94
Honolulu	1,410 (\$12.70)	324,300	\$2,921.62
Dallas	1,860 (\$16.76)	427,800	\$3,854.05
San Francisco	1,590 (\$14.32)	365,700	\$3,294.59
Chicago	1,860 (\$16.76)	427,800	\$3,854.05

In addition to the above, there are security and fuel surcharges, as well as handling and airway bill charges totaling approx. 77,000 yen (\$693.70).

Please note also that some families have experienced additional complications resulting in delays and additional costs depending on which airline and shipper the funeral home employs, and whether a connecting flight is required. Some airlines require that the casket pass through an X-ray machine before shipment, and require advance consent from the deceased's family.

Human Ashes: Ashes in an urn are shipped at the same rates as bodies. Average weight of an export type urn with human ashes including packing material is 9 kilograms. Costs for air freight shipment from Tokyo to various points in the United States are as follows:

Tokyo to:	Rate/Kg	Total Yen	Total Dollars
New York	1,900 (\$17.12)	17,100	\$154.05
Honolulu	1,410 (\$12.70)	12,690	\$114.32
Dallas	1,860 (\$16.76)	16,740	\$150.81
San Francisco	1,590 (\$14.32)	14,310	\$128.92
Chicago	1,860 (\$16.76)	16,740	\$150.81

In addition to the above, there are security surcharge, fuel surcharge, and pickup, handling and airway bill charges totaling 60,000 yen (\$540.54).

Some airlines require that the crematory container be made of light-weight material such as wood, plastic or carton box so that the container can successfully pass through an X-ray machine.

(g) Total Cost:

Below are prices for preparation and freight of air shipment of remains from Tokyo to several U.S. cities.

Embalmed Remains:

Tokyo to:	Dollars
New York	\$14,288.29
Honolulu	\$13,272.97
Dallas	\$14,205.41
San Francisco	\$13,645.95
Chicago	\$14,205.41

Cremated Remains:

Tokyo to:	Dollars
New York	\$6,550.45
Honolulu	\$6,510.72
Dallas	\$6,547.21
San Francisco	\$6,525.32
Chicago	\$6,547.21

7. Exhumation and Shipment

Exhumation of remains is rare in Japan because cremation is the customary practice for disposing of remains. Ashes are normally placed in an urn in the family vault and not buried. The only requirement for transfer of the urn is the approval of the priest of the temple or church

which has jurisdiction over the locality of the family vault. In a municipal cemetery, transfer of the urn would be done by the city, town, or village officer in charge of the cemetery.

8. Autopsies

There are three types of autopsies: 1) Judicial autopsy (for criminal investigation purpose by court order); 2) Administrative autopsy (no crimes are involved, but the cause of death is unknown); and 3) Pathological autopsy or consent autopsy (at the request of the family).

Autopsies are not common in Japan when someone died of a medical or natural cause. It is, therefore, very difficult to make an arrangement when the family wishes to have one. Only when a death occurred under unusual circumstances, for example, if someone died in a house/apartment/hotel, are the police involved in determining whether there was foul play involved or not. If foul play was involved, the police obtain a court order for a judicial autopsy. Once the police determine that a criminal act was not the cause of death, an autopsy is usually not performed in most cities, except for the Metropolitan Tokyo area where the [Tokyo Medical Examiner's Office](#) performs an autopsy when the cause of death is not immediately known. There is no cost for a judicial autopsy and an administrative autopsy. However, the family may have to pay for the transportation from the facility where autopsies are performed to a funeral home. For consent autopsy, the family has to bear the cost, which will be approximately \$3,000.

9. Local Customs Regarding Funerals, Disposition of Remains, Mourning, Memorial Services

Japanese funeral includes a wake, a funeral ceremony, the cremation of the deceased, a burial in a family grave, and a periodic memorial service. More than 99% of deceased Japanese are cremated, and buried in a family grave. At a wake, while the Buddhist priest reads a sutra, the family members, relatives and close friends offer incense in front of the deceased.

The funeral is usually on the day after the wake. The procedure is similar to the wake, and incense is offered while a priest chants a sutra. The funeral ceremony differs slightly as the deceased receives a new Buddhist name. A cremation usually takes about two hours, and the family members, relatives and close friends wait for the completion of the cremation at the crematorium. Japanese cremation procedures do not result in the same sized fine ash as it does in the United States and rather larger-sized pieces of bone. When the cremation is completed, the family and relatives pick the bones out of the ashes and transfer them to the urn using chopsticks.

Mourners traditionally bring condolence money in a special black and silver decorated envelope. Depending on the relation to the deceased, this may be of a value equivalent to between 5,000 (\$45.05) and 30,000 yen (\$270.27).

10. Remarks

The cost for a death certificate varies depending on where the death occurred, and whether the police are involved or not. The hospital death certificate usually costs approx. 5,000 yen (\$45.05). If the death occurs within the Tokyo Metropolitan area and Tokyo's police are involved, the Tokyo Medical Examiner's Office issues a Medical Examiner's report (death certificate) free of charge. If the death occurs outside of the Tokyo Metropolitan area, the death certificate issued by

a police doctor or other designated doctor can cost up to 70,000 yen (\$630.63) because the fee for the examination of the body by a doctor at the police will be charged.